

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities

NDPC-SD


Building Effective Dropout Prevention Programs: Recommendations from Research Synthesis

Loujeania W. Bost, PH.D

“Vision to Practice” Summer Institute:

Seven Million Minutes from Pre-Kindergarten to Graduation

July 14-16, 2009

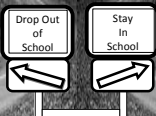


U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

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Choices Are
NEVER
This Obvious



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Understanding Our Challenge:



Delivering educational opportunities that keep youth in school while preparing them for a productive adulthood

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Dropout is a Predictable Process of Life course Disengagement

- Not an isolated event
 - Elementary years, process begins
 - Aggression - 1st grade teachers
 - Attendance - third grade
 - School performance (behavior, attendance, academics) during the elementary years
 - K – 4th Retention (five times more likely to drop out of school)

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Middle School Predictors

(Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; 2006)

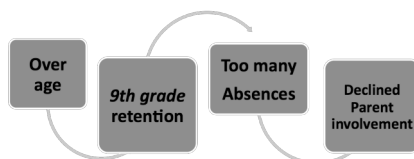
1. The four **strongest** predictors – determined by the end of sixth grade
 1. Poor attendance
 2. Poor behavior
 3. Failing math
 4. Failing English
2. Sixth graders who do not attend school regularly, receive poor behavior marks, or fail math or English
 - 10% chance of graduating on time
 - 20% chance of graduating a year late



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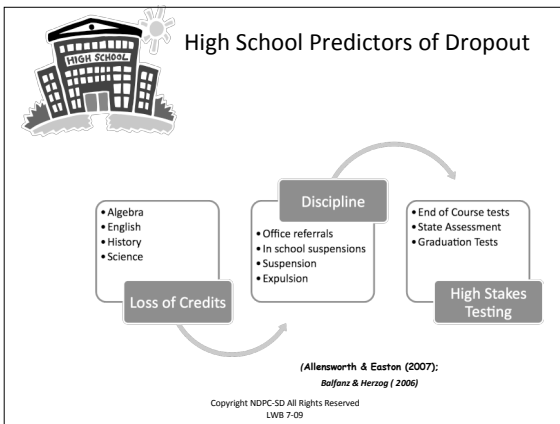


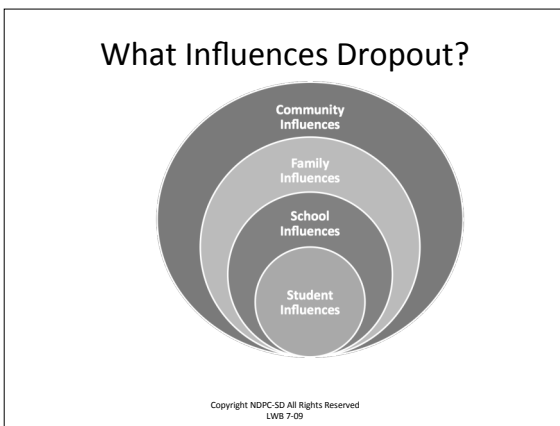
High School Predictors of Dropout



(Allensworth & Easton (2007);
Balfanz & Herzog, 2006)

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Schools factors that influence Dropout

A black and white photograph of a school hallway. The hallway is long and narrow, with lockers on the left and bulletin boards on the right. The perspective is looking down the hallway towards a bright light at the end.

- School policies & procedures
- Structure & class assignment
- Course content & instruction
- Climate & relationships

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Students Factors that Influence Dropout



- **Attendance**
- **Behavior, Discipline**
- **Academic performance**
- **Boredom, relevance & rigor**
- **Resiliency (self esteem, persistence, self determination, motivation)**
- **Relationships**
- **Life Events (high risk behaviors)**

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Family Factors that Influence School Dropout



- **Poverty Level**
- **Education**
- **Language and literacy**
- **Level of involvement**
- **Expectations**
- **Abuse**
- **Mobility**

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Community Factors that influence Dropout



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What We will cover

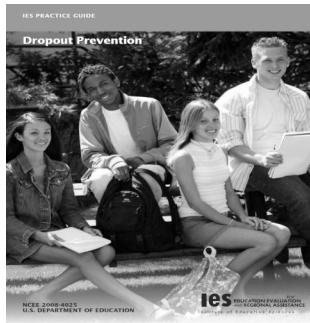
- Discuss six evidence based recommendations from IES practice guide and other critical factors influencing school completion
- A Dropout Prevention Framework to guide improvement planning and implementation

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Dropout Prevention Practice Guide

The Authors

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STRUCTURAL VARIABLES

Creating A Common Architecture
First things First!

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Recommendations: 3 Categories

- **Diagnostic processes** for identifying student-level and schoolwide dropout problems (Rec. 1)
- **Targeted interventions** for a subset of middle and high school students who are identified as at risk of dropping out (Recs. 2, 3, & 4)
- **Schoolwide reforms** designed to enhance engagement (Recs. 5 & 6)

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Interventions That Work



Data Matters...

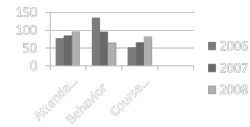
...a lot!



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Diagnostic

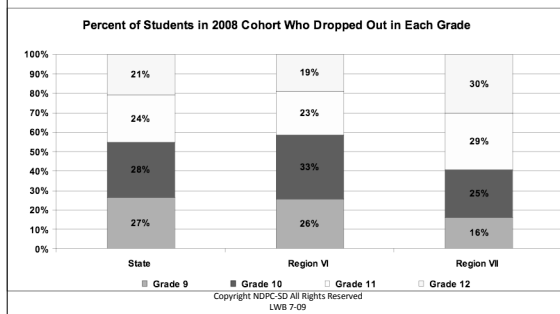
- Develop comprehensive data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out
- Use data to help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out.



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| Results from Virginia's Cohort Report | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Subgroup | % Graduated On-Time | Completed school on time | % Still Enrolled | % Dropout | % Long-term leave | % Unconfirmed status |
| All Students | 82.1% | 86.3% | 2.6% | 8.7% | 0.4% | 2.0% |
| Female | 85.0% | 88.4% | 2.1% | 7.4% | 0.4% | 1.7% |
| Male | 79.2% | 84.3% | 3.1% | 9.9% | 0.4% | 2.2% |
| Black | 73.9% | 78.0% | 4.8% | 12.6% | 0.7% | 3.9% |
| Hispanic | 71.5% | 75.2% | 2.9% | 19.9% | 0.3% | 1.6% |
| White | 85.9% | 90.4% | 1.7% | 6.3% | 0.3% | 1.3% |
| Asian | 93.4% | 94.5% | 1.3% | 3.6% | 0.1% | 0.5% |
| American Indian | 75.7% | 79.3% | 5.0% | 13.9% | 0.0% | 1.8% |
| Native Hawaiian | 85.2% | 89.8% | 3.4% | 4.6% | 0.0% | 2.3% |
| Other | 90.5% | 92.4% | 1.8% | 4.7% | 0.1% | 0.9% |
| Students with Disabilities | 81.8% | 86.4% | n/a | 13.5% | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| Identified as Disadvantaged | 70.6% | 77.5% | 4.7% | 13.5% | 0.7% | 3.6% |
| Limited English Proficient | 69.2% | 72.0% | n/a | 27.0% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| Identified as Migrant | 75.4% | 80.2% | 0.9% | 15.8% | 0.0% | 3.5% |
| Homeless | 60.2% | 65.1% | 10.6% | 18.7% | 2.0% | 3.6% |

Students drop out in all grade levels



Cohort Report: A closer look

- Data for the state, school divisions, and schools can be downloaded at:
- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/ontime_grad_rate.shtml

What do some of the regional data look like?

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High Yield Indicators

Engagement

- ★ Attendance
- ★ Behavior

Research from several U.S. school districts provides a strong foundation for defining early warning signs that students might drop out, but local adaptation is key

Course Performance

- General course performance
- Course performance in core courses
- Number of credits earned

Allensworth & Easton (2007)

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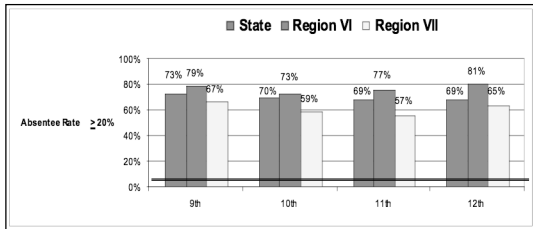
Students in the 2007-2008 cohort

STATEWIDE

| Predictive Factor | Dropouts | Non-dropouts |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Attendance | | |
| ≤ 80% in last school year | 65% | 7% |
| ≤ 80% in prior year | 29% | 4% |

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Absenteeism of the students who dropped out in 2008*



*Longitudinal perspective of annual dropout data, 2008.
Source: Holian, L. (2009). Status of High School Dropouts in the State and Two Southwest Regions. Presented at the VSBA meeting, March 11. REL Appalachia.
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Students in the 2007-2008 cohort

| Retention/promotion | Dropouts | Non-dropouts |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| <i>Retained in high school</i> | | |
| State | 59% | 13% |
| Region VI | 55% | 14% |
| Region VII | 46% | 7% |
| <i>Retained in ninth grade</i> | | |
| State | 37% | 6% |
| Region VI | 34% | 7% |
| Region VII | 27% | 3% |

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Students in the 2007-2008 cohort

| <i>Two or more years Overage for Grade</i> | | |
|--|----------|--------------|
| | Dropouts | Non-dropouts |
| State | 68% | 10% |
| Region VI | 66% | 12% |
| Region VII | 60% | 11% |

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Students who drop out in Virginia have more risk factors

Risk factors analyzed for students enrolled in 2008

- Changing schools during the school year
- Repeating the current grade
- Being absent more than 20 percent of the time
- Two or more years overage for grade

| | | Number of Risk Factors | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Grade level | | 0 | 1 or more | 2 or more | 3 or more | 4 |
| Ninth grade | Non-dropout | 73.8% | 26.2% | 10.4% | 4.0% | 0.9% |
| | Dropout | 4.6% | 95.4% | 77.6% | 53.0% | 18.4% |
| Tenth grade | Non-dropout | 81.5% | 18.5% | 4.3% | 0.9% | 0.1% |
| | Dropout | 8.7% | 91.3% | 57.7% | 21.0% | 3.4% |
| Eleventh grade | Non-dropout | 83.7% | 16.3% | 3.5% | 0.6% | 0.0% |
| | Dropout | 13.9% | 86.1% | 45.6% | 14.2% | 1.3% |
| Twelfth grade | Non-dropout | 6.1% | 93.9% | 14.0% | 1.8% | 0.1% |
| | Dropout | 6.2% | 93.8% | 63.9% | 63.9% | 1.2% |

*Longitudinal perspective of annual dropout data, 2008.

Source: VDOE data analysis conducted with technical assistance from Laura Hollan, Ph.D., REL Appalachia, 2009.

Establish Early Warning Systems

- Use longitudinal, student level data to get an accurate read on graduation and dropout rates.
- Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavior problems, and retention
- Collect and document accurate information on student withdrawals.

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Establish Early Warning Systems

- Monitor the academic and social performance of students continually
- Review student level data to identify students at risk of dropping out.
- Monitor students sense of engagement and belonging in school.

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Early warning indicator toolkit

- Uses data to identify students in ninth grade at risk of not succeeding in high school.
- Modeled on the Boston City Schools' Composite Learning Index: http://www.bpe.org/school_dev/cli
- Will include a user's guide and video including demonstrations of appropriate uses of the data.
- Can be used as part of the Academic Review process for high schools that do not meet the Board of Education's recently adopted Graduation and Completion Index for school accreditation.

Coming Soon in Virginia!

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Diagnostic

Roadblock

- A huge volume of data compounded by outdated, slow data systems & inefficient procedures
- Data sharing issues

Solutions

- New real-time, longitudinal data systems are available that support disaggregation and data sharing.
- Centralize data collection & dissemination at the district level; revise district policies & procedures to help foster this sharing

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Diagnostic

Road block


- Inadequate/inaccurate exit codes yield useless data.
- More burden may be placed on staff.

Solutions


- Improve coding to give a true picture of exiting
- Automate data system checks and early warning systems as much as possible via the data system
- Institute a team to examine data from various sources

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Targeted Interventions



Caring
Adult
Advocate




Academic
Support




Behavior
and Social
Skills

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Assign an adult advocate



**Choose committed adults
and provide training**



Establish regular meeting times



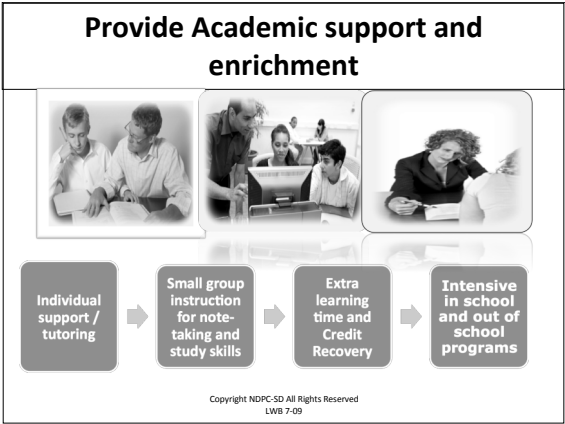
**Communicate potential
obstacles**

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Adult Advocates

| Roadblocks | Solutions |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School schedules don't allow time to meet with advocates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rearrange school schedule; hold meetings during existing breaks in the school day |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's hard to find staff interested in participating. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek Volunteer, partner with community organizations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Resistance Student Resistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role clarification Building and maintaining trusting relationships |

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Academic Support & Enrichment

| Roadblocks | Solutions |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not enough time in the school day to add more academic programs• Students don't want to participate outside of scheduled classes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer enrichment activities at different times from core classes; offer as electives; offer after-school or summer programs• Make these activities part of the regular class schedule |

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Academic Support & Enrichment

| Road blocks | Solutions |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's hard finding tutors who are good and motivated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruit interested school staff, parents and/or business volunteers• Establish partnerships with community organizations and postsecondary institutions• Seek supplemental services under NCLB for eligible at-risk students |

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Implement programs to improve classroom behavior and social skills



Academic & Behavior Mentors



Frequent positive rewards and recognition



Problem solving and relationship building strategies

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Improve classroom behavior and social skills

Roadblocks

- Limited resources available for social skills classes.
- Stereotyping at-risk students as "kids beyond help"

Solutions

- Teachers can model positive communications with students every day and incorporate positive examples of such skills into any curricular area
- Provide professional development around building good classroom behavior and social skills for all students

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School-wide Interventions

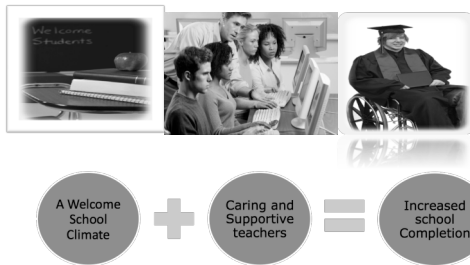


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Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.



Supportive School Supportive Climate



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Personalized learning and Instruction

- | Road blocks | Solutions |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff may resist restructuring of the school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, steady leadership • professional development and collaborative planning • Provide opportunity to transfer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover of key staff can impede/reverse progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit principal and staff input before implementing restructuring will reduce resistance • Develop realistic timelines for implementation |

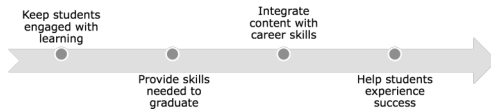
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Instruction Matters



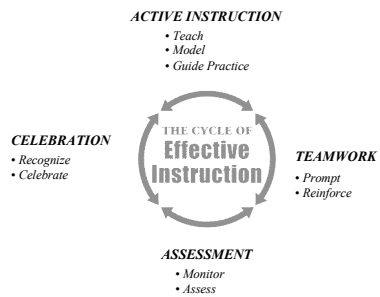
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Provide rigorous and relevant instruction



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Cycle of Effective Instruction Slavin



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Rigorous & Relevant Instruction

Road blocks

- Resistance to integrating CTE into academic curricula
- State standards and college admission requirements discourage integration of academic and career and technical education

Solutions

- Provide professional development on smooth integration of academic content with career-related info
- Relevant career examples and academic courses that cover the expected content can be integrated into traditional course content, titles, and descriptions.

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Rigorous & Relevant Instruction

Road blocks

- Students lack interest in attending college

Solutions

- Stress the connection between academics and professional success
- Have students visit colleges and interact with their students & staff

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Potentially Effective Interventions for Dropout Prevention

| | 1. Data analysis | 2. Adult advocate | 3. Academic support | 4. Classroom behavior and social skills | 5. Personalized learning environment | 6. Help students discover purpose |
|--|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| WWC-rated interventions showing positive or potentially positive effects | | | | | | |
| Achievement for Latinos with Academic Success (ALAS) | | | | | | |
| Career Academies | | | | | | |
| Check and Connect | | | | | | |
| High School Redirection | | | | | | |
| Talent Development | | | | | | |
| Talent Search | | | | | | |
| Twelve Together | | | | | | |

Note: Dark green represents key characteristics of a program and pale shading represents non-key characteristics.

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Interventions with No Detectable Effects on Dropout

| | 1. Data analysis | 2. Adult advocate | 3. Academic support | 4. Classroom behavior and social skills | 5. Personalized learning environment | 6. Help students discover purpose |
|---|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| WWC-rated interventions showing no detectable impacts | | | | | | |
| First Things First | | | | | | |
| Middle College High School | | | | | | |
| Project GRAD (Graduation Ready Achieves Dreams) | | | | | | |
| Quantum Opportunity Program | | | | | | |

Note: Dark green represents key characteristics of a program and pale shading represents non-key characteristics.

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Didn't Meet WWC Standards, etc.

| | 1. Data analysis | 2. Adult advocate | 3. Academic support | 4. Classroom behavior and social skills | 5. Personalized learning environment | 6. Help students discover purpose |
|--|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Other interventions that did not meet WWC standards or did not evaluate outcomes related to dropping out | | | | | | |
| Across Ages Advancement | | | | | | |
| Via Individual Determination (AVID) | | | | | | |
| CASA Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows (START) | | | | | | |
| Coca Cola Valued Youth Program | | | | | | |
| Keepin' It Real | | | | | | |
| Responding in Peaceful and Positive (RIPP) Ways | | | | | | |
| School Transitional Environment Program (STEP) | | | | | | |
| Teen Outreach Program (TO) | | | | | | |
| Too Good For Violence (TGFV) | | | | | | |

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What Works - In Review

- Use system and student data to learn about your school and students
 - How many dropout, who are they, when do they drop out, why do they drop out?
- Use targeted interventions to keep at-risk students engaged in the learning process and the school community at large
- Use schoolwide measures to make school as engaging, relevant, interesting, enjoyable and useful to students as possible

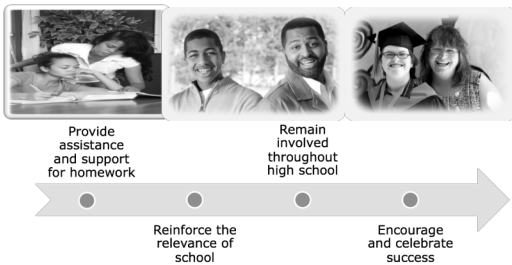
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Other critical factors

- Parental engagement and involvement
- Policy review/revision
- Professional development

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Parental Involvement promotes school completion



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Cultivating family involvement



Strategies:

- Offer a wide variety of ways to participate
- Support participation in any school or community opportunity
- Account for cultural and individual differences
- Enable participation regardless of skill level
- Provide support to improve participation skills

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Professional Development Matters

- Highly Qualified and skilled workforce
- Linked to student needs
- Focus on what works
- Building and sustaining professional learning communities
- Student empowerment

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Policies Matter

Attendance

Discipline

Course Accrual

Graduation
requirements

Some policies can have unintended consequences that impact school completion

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Investments Matter

Targeted Assistance:

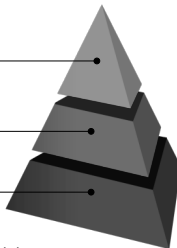
Provides customized, direct assistance

Field-Based Assistance:

Provide technical assistance to school divisions to help them assess, align and integrate resources to promote successful high school graduation for all students.

Foundation Assistance:

VDE creates vision statement, strategically aligned resources, design and rollout of strategies, tools, and programs used to build capacity across the state



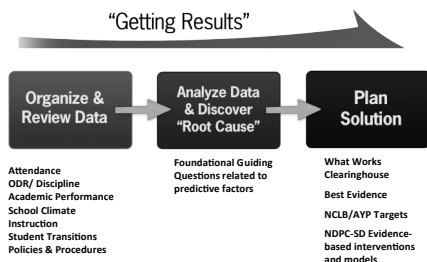
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Results Matter Most



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"Getting Results"



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Parting Notes

- First, determine your school's specific needs.
- Implementation of early intervening strategies that are universal in nature and focused on prevention.
- Initiation of targeted, school wide, and long-term strategies should include a plan to **ensure high-quality implementation** of the strategies.

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Parting Notes

- Program offerings should provide extra help for certain groups of students who share particular risk factors. Extensive or personalized help for targeted students.
- High quality implementation of the strategies, individually and as part of a larger, comprehensive plan, will ***require investments in professional development*** for staff, not only to promote staff skills but also, where necessary, to change staff behaviors and attitudes.


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Citation

Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. (2008). Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide (NCEE 2008–4025). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf

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